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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BASRAH 000001

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: BASRA PROVINCIAL ELECTION ROADMAP

REF: A) BASRA 00081; B) BASRA 00070; C) BASRA 00067

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REASON: 1.4 (b)

11. (C/REL MNFI) Summary: 81 political entities have registered for placement on the Basra provincial ballot, including eight coalitions and 19 independent candidates. Only eight Provincial Council members are running for re-election and many independent candidates have decided not to run, clearing the way for established parties to do well, particularly the ISCI/Badr coalition "Al Shahid Al Mihrab List and Independent Power." Sunnis and Sadrists, who boycotted the last provincial elections, are expected to participate fully. End summary.

12. (C/REL MNFI) According to Basra Governorate Electoral Office (GEO) Director Hazim Joda, election day will pass smoothly and large-scale fraud or violence is not possible. The 53 parties, eight coalitions and 16 independents registered represent a whopping 1,285 candidates. No Basra candidates were rejected by the De-Ba'athification Commission review.

Parties

13. (C/REL MNFI) Of the 53 parties on the ballot, only the following nine entities put forth the maximum 35 candidates: (Note: ballot registration number follows political entity name.)

- Fadilah (154)
- National Reform Trend (153)
- Iraqi National Conference (274)
- Independent Basra Gathering for Development and Reconstruction (247)
- Council of Elders of the South for Basra (291)
- Iraqi People's Gathering (410)
- Iraq Future Gathering (478)
- Iraqi Constitutional Party (482)
- Independent Free Current party (284)

14. (C/REL MNFI) Other large parties include:

- Free Democratic Iraq Gathering (114); 32 candidates
- Independents for the Sake of Iraq (367); 31 candidates
- Islamic Allegiance Party (208); 29 candidates
- South Region List (444); 28 candidates
- Integrity and Construction (376); 28 candidates
- Unity and Justice Gathering (269); 27 candidates (headed by Sheikh Amr al-Faiz)
- The Gathering of Good and National Reform (394); 26 candidates.
- The State Party (Wa'il Abd al-Latif); 24 candidates
- The Intellectuals and Elites Movement (Dr. Tha'a Ameen); 24

candidates

15. (C/REL MNFI) 19 parties have fewer than ten candidates. Three parties -- the Chaldean National Council, Reformists, and Iraqi Popular Movement -- have a single candidate each. Another party of interest is the Islamic Labor Organization (225), with 20 candidates, which Jodah indicated is backed by "Iranian Intelligence."

Coalitions

16. (SBU) Following are the eight registered coalitions, five of which submitted the maximum 35 candidates:

-- National Trend in Basra (428): Composed of the Iraqi Communist Party, Democratic National Party, and Independent Sons of Iraq.

-- Al Shahid Al Mihrab List and Independent Power (290): Composed of the Iraqi Islamic Supreme Council (ISCI), Independent Assembly for Iraq, Badr Organization, Hizbullah Movement in Iraq, Sayid Shuhadaa Ain Islamic Movement.

-- List of Iraqi National Unity (105): Composed of Iraqi National Unity Gathering and the Unified Iraq Council.

-- Rule of Law Coalition (302): Composed of Al Da'wa Islamic Party, Independents, Al Da'wa Islamic Party - Iraq Organization, Solidarity in Iraq, Iraqi Turkomen, Islamic Union.

-- Iraqi National List (498): Composed of Iraqi National Accord and Loyalty to Iraq Gathering.

-- Basra Al-Khair (305): Composed of Hizbullah al Iraq, and

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Peace and Construction List (only 22 candidates).

-- National Iraqi Project Gathering (149): Composed of Iraqi National Dialogue Front, Iraqi Freedom Movement, Iraqi National Dialogue Council, Iraqi Arabic Gathering, National Democratic Gathering, National Movement for Independence, Free Iraqi Patriotic Gathering, Iraqi Dignity Front, National Independence Movement, Will and Construction, People Movement for Iraq Unity, National Future Gathering, Sons of Iraq, Independence and Renaissance Movement, National Front Gathering, and Iraqi Front for National Dialogue (only 18 candidates).

-- Iraq is My Country (310): Composed of Independent Cultural Gathering and Iraqi National Democratic Alliance (only 17 candidates).

Independents

17. (C/REL MNFI) Many of the independents who registered as candidates in June and July failed to have their names put on the ballot. REO contacts Said Abd Aaly al-Musawi and Sheikh Amir al-Faiz) indicated that some of the following independent candidates will be of interest: :

-- Dr. Adil Al Thamiry (833): Instructor at the University of Basra Art School, described by REO contacts as "secular and independent."

-- Kareen al-Haj Soudi al-Ghazii (503): Works for Southern Oil and is said to have strong ties to Iraqi Shi'a political parties.

-- Ahmed al-Hajj Jawad al-Zaidawy (665): Described as "definitely independent" and a religious moderate. His father is tribal sheikh of the Beni Said Tribe and works for Sayyed al-Shuhadah (SAS), according to Sheikh Mohammed al-Zaydawi.

-- Samir Al-Mayahi (640): Contacts say this candidate's father, Abu Sameer Al-Mayahy, is a leader of a Badr assassination cell.

-- Sabeeh Habeeb Yasur Al-Hashimi (644): Contacts describe him as an Islamist, who works for the Sadrists and is close to Fadhila, active in the Businessmen Union.

Minority Groups

18. (C/REL MNFI) Minority groups are more active this time around, seeking representation of groups such as Sunni, women, Christian, and black:

-- Sunnis. After boycotting the last provincial elections, Sunni and Sadrists are expected to participate fully this time. Parties with a Sunni profile include the Islamic Iraqi Party (IIP), the National Dialogue Front (part of the National Iraqi Project Gathering coalition), and the Iraqi National Unity Gathering (part of the List of Iraqi National Unity coalition).

-- Women. Only one female candidate, Anaam al-Salihi (501), is represented among the independents. Under Iraqi law, at least one-quarter of all candidates must be women. Of the 1,285 total candidates, 337 are women, or just over 26 percent.

-- Christians. According to Article 50, one council seat is reserved for the Christian community. Two parties are competing for this seat: the Chaldean National Council (657) under Sala Aziz Yusef Maliki, and the United Democratic Party of the Chaldeans (166) represented by Sa'ad Butrus al-Yas.

-- Basrawi Blacks. The Iraqi Freedom Movement is a new party representing the interests of Iraqis of Sub-Saharan decent. For financial reasons, it is running as part of National Dialogue Front under the coalition National Iraqi Project Gathering. The party is contributing 8 candidates to the ballot.

-- Sadrists. Represented by three parties: Independent Free Current party (284), Integrity and Construction party (376), and Sadr Al Iraq (485). The former two parties were endorsed on January 11 by the Sadrist Trend in the Council of Representatives; the latter is philosophically Sadrist but not affiliated with the Office of the Martyr Sadr. These are large parties with 35, 28, and 22 candidates respectively.

Few Incumbents Running

19. (C/REL MNFI) Few of the current Provincial Council members are up for reelection. Those standing again include Economic Committee Chairman Munadhil Abd Khangir, who is running with his

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new party, the Independent Intellectuals of Basra (339). Former Governor Hasan al-Rasheed (Badr Organization) is also running again with the Al Shahid Al Mihrab List and Independent Power coalition. Notably absent is the Governor, who has told the REO of his intention to seek a ministerial position in Baghdad. PC Chairman Mohammed al-Obadi (Da'wa) is also not running, although his son apparently is. The Chairman of the Reconstruction Committee, Ghali Muter, is seen as a liability and has been excluded by his own party, according to the UK Foreign Commonwealth Office in Basra.

110. (C/REL MNFI) Comment: Last summer's trend toward independent candidates seems to have subsided, but there is still a dizzying list of choices for a largely illiterate electorate. With few incumbents running, the Provincial Council will have a new face after the election. The Al Shahid Al Mihrab List and Independent Power coalition (290), which includes ISCI and Badr, should do well. The Rule of Law Coalition (302) should also do well, given that Maliki's Da'wa

party should benefit in Basra from the success of Charge-of-the-Knights -- much more so than from his Tribal Support Councils. Although the unpopular governor is not running, his Fadhila party will probably still suffer from blame for Basra's broken infrastructure. With three parties and 85 candidates, the Sadrists will likely gain seats. Also of interest will be Sheikh Amir Fiaz's secular and moderate Unity and Justice Gathering party, which has popular support.

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